

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Judith A. Caviston, Ed.D.

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Mount Saint Joseph Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 120 W Wissahickon Avenue

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Flourtown State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 19031-1899

County Montgomery State School Code Number\* \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone 215-233-3177 Fax 215-233-9121

Web site/URL http://msjacad.org/s/743/start.aspx E-mail jcaviston@msjacad.org

Twitter Handle \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/msja  
https://twitter.com/MountStJoseph cad Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL \_\_\_\_\_  
http://www.youtube.com/user/MSJACommunications Blog \_\_\_\_\_ Other Social Media Link \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* N/A

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr.,

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Other)

District Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. NA

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Kent Roman, N/A

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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**Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.**

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
0 Middle/Junior high schools  
0 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 0 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- ☐ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☒ Suburban  
☐ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural
3. 5 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	159	159
10	0	136	136
11	0	139	139
12	0	133	133
Total Students	0	567	567

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 89 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 1%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	3
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	552
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.005
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL  
 Number of non-English languages represented: 0  
 Specify non-English languages: N/A
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 0

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.  
 N/A

9. Students receiving special education services: 20 %  
115 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

0 Autism	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	40 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	31 Specific Learning Disability
23 Emotional Disturbance	0 Speech or Language Impairment
2 Hearing Impairment	17 Traumatic Brain Injury
0 Mental Retardation	3 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0 Multiple Disabilities	0 Developmentally Delayed

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers	46
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 12:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	94%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	139
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	100%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes X      No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.      1998

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Mount Saint Joseph Academy is a private, selective day school for girls in grades nine through twelve that offers a college preparatory education in the Catholic tradition. Founded by the Sisters of Saint Joseph the Mount has been preparing generations of young women for the challenges of college and life since 1858.

From its modest beginning with twenty students, to the present day with its student body of 567, the Mount remains faithful to its mission to empower young women to realize their fullest potential in a learning environment that fosters excellence tempered by gentleness and compassion.

Students are challenged to shape the future in a collaborative culture that provides a holistic education with an emphasis on global responsibility. Faithful to “educating founders,” Mount Saint Joseph Academy enables students to be agents of transformation in the face of moral and ethical challenges in an ever-evolving society. Trusting in the wisdom echoed by the Constitution of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the mission asserts, “On the education of women largely depends the future of society.”

The school moved to its present site in 1961 in Flourtown, Pennsylvania. Since then the school has been expanded numerous times to accommodate the academic mission and student needs. The most recent project was the multi-million dollar enhancement to our STEAM facilities and equipment that was just completed in August 2013.

Over the course of the Mount’s 155 year history, numerous traditions have evolved that are cherished and continue to the present day. Founder’s Day is celebrated every October. The entire school community walks from the school to the “Old Mount” at Chestnut Hill College. A special Mass is held in the historic chapel to remember the sacrifices made and inspirations provided by the six founding members of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Mass is followed by a day of community celebrations.

The school has a firmly established reputation for academic excellence. In 1928, MSJA was the first Catholic school to be approved by the Middle States Association (MSA). This accreditation has been most recently renewed with the successful dual accreditation by MSA and the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS) in 2012.

The Mount’s curriculum continues to be rigorous, expansive and successful. Standardized assessments continuously validate the success of MSJA’s academic program. Each graduating class receives significant recognition, numerous honors and scholarships. For example, the 139 members of the Class of 2013 were awarded 684 scholarships totaling \$24,385,565.00. SAT results have consistently placed MSJA students in the top 15% of the nation for the last five+ years. The Class of 2014 has two students who scored perfect scores on the SAT. Also, there are 9 National Merit Semi-Finalists and 18 Commended Students.

These results are even more impressive when noting that approximately 20% of the student body receives special assistance and/or accommodations for physical, emotional and/or learning disabilities. MSJA has devised strategies and implemented resources to assist students to overcome their individual challenges and ultimately succeed.

Mount alumnae can be found on Broadway stages, published in scientific journals, featured as international lecturers on cutting edge medical discoveries and even on the U.S. Women’s Field Hockey Team in the 2012 London Summer Olympics.

Mount students also excel beyond the classroom. The Athletic Program is outstanding, with too many championships and successes to list here. MSJA's Community Service Corps reaches out to society's marginalized citizens both locally and globally providing goods and services with love and compassion.

MSJA's Robotics Team, The Firebirds, have caught the attention of the television networks, radio stations, and even Oprah's online magazine for both their scientific excellence and their altruistic sharing of their knowledge and experience. They initiated a global campaign, "First Ladies for Ladies FIRST" which contacted high profile female corporate and political leaders to support female STEAM education. First Lady, Michelle Obama, and the CEOs of BJ's, J&J, KeyCorp and Avon have responded to the call and supported this initiative.

The entire Mount community participates in the stewardship of its mission to assist low and middle-income families with the financial realities of an excellent education. Over 20% of the students who attend MSJA receive financial aid in the form of scholarship, tuition assistance or a combination of both.

Mount Saint Joseph Academy, born in the cherished goal of the finest education for women, has continued on her course for 155 years. Each young woman who enters begins a four year journey that prepares and sustains them throughout their lives and positively impacts generations to come.



## PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

a) Mount Saint Joseph Academy utilizes standardized test results to evaluate the progress of its students and confirm that all graduates are prepared for college-level studies.

Admission to the Academy is through the Mount's Entrance/Scholarship Examination (HSPT by Scholastic Testing Service). However, the Mount's mission is an extension of that of the Sisters of St. Joseph, that "all may be one." This core belief in unity, reconciliation and inclusion permeates all aspects of the Mount – including Admissions. Applicants that exhibit indicators of future success if nurtured in the Mount curriculum and environment, they are also accepted.

The overall evaluation of applicants results in an approximate acceptance rate of 43% percent of Admission Test takers. Students commute to the Mount from approximately 17 school districts and bring educational experiences from more than 73 different Elementary Schools.

Standardized tests are administered to every student in the Fall of each academic year. Beginning in 2012, grades 9-11 take the PSAT. Students are expected to score above the national average and show improvement each year.

All seniors take the SAT. SAT results have consistently placed MSJA students in the top 15% of the nation for the last five+ years. The Class of 2013 had 7 National Merit Finalists, 4 National Achievement Finalists and 13 Commended Students.

The Class of 2014 has two students who scored perfect scores on the SAT. Also, there are 9 National Merit Semi-Finalists and 18 Commended Students.

The results of the AP Test takers is also impressive. In 2013 there were 339 AP students who took 436 exams with 90.3% successfully scoring a 3 or above and 21.9% scoring a perfect 5. The ACT Five Year Trends show that Mount students consistently perform well above the state mean on those tests as well.

b) Standardized testing performance has consistently remained within the top 15% nationally for the past five years.

Although these results are exemplary, there have been slight intermittent gains and declines in scores during this period. These minor fluctuations are mostly attributed to normal student testing variations. However, The Mount recognizes that the noted declines from 2009 to 2010 are partially attributable to the increased expansion of the student population's demographics. Around that time, the entire Mount community had notably recommitted itself to the Mount's core belief in diversity and inclusion.

Specifically the Mount has worked hard to foster a holistic student population from varying ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. The school's administration has taken steps to open the Mount experience to all 21st century learners by incorporating strategies to guide their instruction. Twenty percent of the current student population receives special assistance with various physical, emotional and/or learning difficulties.

Some of the resources that have been made available to these students include the Academic Coach who is a staff member that provides learning support to the students at no additional cost. The Coach acts as a link between teacher, student and parents concerning tests and classroom performance. (S)he uses weekly meetings to closely monitor the academic affairs of students assigned to his/her roster.

The Mount also works in conjunction with the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU). This agency provides specialists in math and reading as well as a School Counselor.

The Student Assistance Committee (SAC) consists of the Principal, the Dean of Studies, the Dean of

Students and the Guidance Department. The committee meets twice a month and collaborates to determine effective ways to provide services for students struggling with academic, emotional or social issues.

For students with auditory impairments, teachers are encouraged to record lessons. For students with visual impairments, the Mount has a book share which offers students opportunities to listen and read simultaneously. In addition, the Fairview Device takes a snapshot of the Smart Board, which a student can then enlarge to make viewing more accessible. There is also specialized Physical Education equipment so that visually impaired students are an engaged part of all student life.

Students who are absent for extended medical leave are given a Mac computer and encouraged to Skype into classes when they are able to participate in instruction. Also, The Mount's integrated 1:1 iPad program enables students to customize the format of information accessibility to best meet their unique needs.

The fact that these efforts have enabled these students to survive and thrive in the Mount's academically rigorous program and achieve consistently high scores on the standardized assessments validates the efficacy of the Mount's overall program.

Assessment results are also carefully reviewed by the Academic Board. This entity probes trends in order to adjust current course scope or devise curriculum additions and/or revisions. For example, recent test data indicated that principles of statistics are an integral part of tested topics in multiple academic disciplines. Therefore, a sub-committee comprised of Mathematics and Science teachers designed and implemented a Statistics and Probability course to fill this need.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

In addition to monitoring a student's progress through classroom activities all teachers regularly measure the student's mastery of a subject with a variety of graded assessments. These assessments, whether homework checkups, subject quizzes, major tests, long-term projects, or classroom participation are specifically constructed to measure the student's grasp of the material being taught in that class and their ability to synthesize the information and adapt it to other situations.

Teachers use various modes of assessment per class, to allow for varying learning styles. Rubrics, required for all projects, must be made available to the students at the start of the assignment. They are traditionally distributed and discussed in class, as well as posted to the school's online BlackBoard, for easy access. School-wide rubrics have been developed for grading any assignment that includes a written or oral component. These rubrics can be tailored to fit the needs of a particular department.

Each department has the option of using total points for calculating the student's final grade or weighting the value of different types of assessments. Whichever method is selected, it is used uniformly throughout the department, and becomes a clear systematic approach to grading all students' work.

All classes must include a comprehensive assessment as part of the student's final grade, which may take the form of a written final exam, a project with a written and/or oral component, or a combination of forms. All final assessments count for 20% of the student's final semester grade. Only AP classes are exempt from this requirement.

Departments meet regularly to review the presentation and assessment of the curriculum. In addition, where the course taught is part of a sequence (i.e. French I and French II, or Chemistry and Honors Chemistry II) the scope and depth of material being covered is reviewed frequently and the teachers work in partnership to ensure seamless transitions for the students. When two or more teachers teach the same subject, at the same level, assessments are collaborative, thus ensuring uniformity and fairness for the students.

The Department Chairperson reviews all final assessments before submitting them to the Studies Office. The final exam for classes with two or more teachers must cover the same material and be presented identically.

Rubrics are reviewed periodically to ensure that they reflect the current pedagogy most applicable to the

students and address the needs of the diverse 21st century learner.

Students and parents have twenty-four (24) hour access to the Power School portal, allowing them to view updated grades for each class. Being able to view "live" data allows for concerns to be addressed early and for parents to be proactive in their role of their daughter's success. Report cards are issued to each student twice each semester (four times per year).

Student success and noteworthy accomplishments are shared and celebrated via a daily homeroom period during which loudspeaker announcements are made by faculty and students. There are also daily updates to the website and frequent topic-specific "E-blasts" to parents and alumnae.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

One of the fundamental components of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph is the concern and care for the "dear neighbor". This principle permeates the Mount's culture and makes the sharing of best practices a natural part of the school's operation.

Faculty and Administration have traveled to other schools to conduct workshops on block scheduling. Mount faculty members belong to numerous professional organizations and are encouraged to participate fully in meetings, conferences, seminars and online forums.

Student and faculty teams have shared their energy with surrounding schools and community. Mount students have visited middle schools to field questions about transitions and the high school experience.

Faith sharing blossomed as the Mount's Theology Chair originated a program called "Walk the Talk". This initiative reached out to local faith communities to expose Mount students to a Quaker Meeting, Jewish Synagogue and Muslim Jummah. These visits were then reciprocated by having representatives of those communities attend a Catholic Mass. After each service, girls were able to meet informally and talk about similarities and differences, and ways to combat misconceptions.

Each Fall, the Mount's Robotics team, the Firebirds invite young "drivers" to an all-female girlPOWER robotics competition, held at MSJA. This off-season event allows over 500 young women from around the tri-state area to a friendly competition, while actively engaging in traditionally male-dominated roles. When not competing, they hold "Robotics 101" and "Build Your Own Robot" workshops for young members of the audience to encourage STEAM interest in budding engineers and scientists.

The Mount's Community Service Corps enables students to engage in a variety of meaningful service projects. Many service sites throughout the area are tended each week by Mount students. Some of these include Saint Francis Inn Soup Kitchen in Philadelphia, Kensington's LaSalle Academy for severely marginalized students, the Drueding Center for homeless families in Philadelphia, and local animal rescues and shelters throughout the 5-county region.

A few of the other CSC programs (that are not weekly) include: the Thanksgiving Basket Outreach Programs that support fifty local families; Winterfest is a program that reaches out to children with special needs and Café Night which supports a young girls' skill center project in Senegal, Africa. In Summer, 2014, a new outreach initiative will find Mount students in Haiti assisting rebuilding efforts.

These are just selected examples of MSJA's commitment to fostering community through the sharing of information and experiences.

### **4. Engaging Families and Community:**

The Mount is extremely cognizant that the school community extends beyond the physical walls. Families, alumnae and the communities' roles in each student's success has been cultivated and nurtured through numerous types of communication and participation.

New parents and guardians are oriented and integrated into the school community through a series of formal and informal interactions. Beginning in December with a “Welcome Packet” of information sent to the accepted incoming students and their families. This is followed in February when new students are welcomed onto campus to meet faculty and register for classes. In May, the Parents' Association joins in the welcome by hosting a Parent/Student picnic for the incoming families to meet students, faculty and other families. In September, the new freshmen go through a in-depth and friendly orientation to acclimate them to the school community. Finally, in September the parents and students of the freshman class are invited to the Freshman Tea where the 9th grade parents are personally introduced by their daughters to the Administration and Faculty.

Once integrated into the school community, parents, students and alumnae are kept informed of new developments and achievements via numerous publications. There are monthly and quarterly magazines and a student newspaper.

Online resources are also available including directed Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter updates, an online alumni publication, an open-access online alumnae database, and a dedicated website, [www.msjaalum.org](http://www.msjaalum.org). Parents also receive weekly email blasts, have access to Power School and BlackBoard.

Direct email addresses, phone extensions, websites, GoogleVoice mailboxes, etc. are shared with parents, alumni, students, and other community members and their use is encouraged.

Action groups comprised of parents, faculty, and paid professionals work together to address contemporary student hurdles. These groups provide valuable knowledge and problem-solving resources to all Mount stakeholders by organizing assemblies, discussion groups and other training/information venues. Examples of issues recently addressed include: bullying, cyber-responsibilities, substance abuse, anxiety and tolerance. Additional student support is given through Peer Mentors, Guidance Teams, the Student Action Committee, the Community Service Corps, the 20/20 Club, the Multicultural Club, and the Student Council.

The Administration also utilizes resources such as SurveyMonkey for obtaining input and opinions from all Mount stakeholders on all types of issues relating to student success and school improvement. These efforts ensure that all community members are engaged and that communication avenues are always kept fresh and focused.

## **PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Curriculum:**

Mount Saint Joseph Academy's program of study provides students with a broad liberal arts education enriched by the values of the Catholic Church. The curriculum balances required knowledge of various disciplines with consideration of a student's individual strengths and interests so that the graduate is prepared and successful in post-secondary education.

The school year is divided into 2 semesters; students take 3 or 4 credits per semester for total of 7 or 8 credits per school year, with 28 credits required for graduation. In addition to the College Preparatory curriculum, the Mount offers 16 Advanced Placement Programs and 27 Honors Courses.

Students are required to take four credits of Theology and English and three credits of Social Studies, Mathematics, Science and Foreign Language. Further requirements include Physical Education, Health Education, Fine Arts and Computer Literacy. As a college preparatory school, the Mount's curriculum is aligned with the curriculum that most colleges are seeking.

Each Mount student must be enrolled in Theology each school year. All students study the Old and New Testaments of The Bible, and Christian Morality and Ethical Issues in Church and Society. Upperclassmen offerings include Catholic Social Teaching, Bioethics, or Vocation and Human Sexuality.

The English curriculum results in students that are able to demonstrate proficiency in the oral or written communication of information, opinions and experiences. Students develop their grammar, vocabulary, public speaking, and reading comprehension skills through the English Department's numerous offerings. The English Department offers both Advanced Placement and Honors level courses.

Students who complete the Mathematics curriculum are able to demonstrate strong inductive and deductive reasoning skills by applying correct mathematical vocabulary and notation to real-world situations. The Mathematics Department offers Advanced Placement Calculus AB and BC courses as well as Honors Algebra I and II, Geometry and Pre-Calculus.

Concepts of Physics, Chemistry and Biology are the required core for the Science Curriculum. These baseline courses enable students to demonstrate comprehension of the salient principles of the physical and biological sciences and demonstrate proficiency in scientific inquiry. Qualified students can select Honors level advanced courses and/or AP level courses. Other offerings include Genetics, Physiology, Environmental Science, and an Introduction to Engineering.

The Social Studies curriculum ensures a thorough familiarity with the United States' Constitutional system of government and the obligations of citizenship, as well as the ability to think critically about historical information by interpreting documents, analyzing data and identifying cause and effect. It includes the study of World History and United States History. Social Studies electives include: Global Interdependence, Psychology, Government and Economics.

The Mount is in full compliance with the National Blue Ribbon School program's foreign language requirement which aligns easily with the school's mission to direct each student toward global responsibility. The ability to communicate is essential. Three levels of the same foreign language are required to graduate. Courses are designed to ensure that students are able understand, speak, read and write in a foreign language as well as demonstrate how the language compares to English. Students have their choice of French, Spanish, and Latin at the college-prep, Honors or AP levels.

The Fine Arts course offerings are expansive and representative of the various disciplines within that field. Students explore the visual and performing arts through course offerings that include: Design, Art History, Painting, Ceramics, Print Media in Advertising, Commercial Design, Theater Performance, Speech/Communication, Film Appreciation, and AP Music Theory.

The Physical Education and Health curriculum teaches students how to choose healthful behaviors for their lives.

There are some non-credit, required courses. These include Guidance I and Guidance II which are designed to aid in the transition to High School and teenage life, focusing on time management, goal setting as well as developing techniques to balance personal values, goals and stresses.

Technology is such a critical component of education, that one of the first classes Freshmen take is Information Literacy and Technology. Further study by all students into Web Design Applications, Computer Systems Applications, Multimedia Design, or Movie and Game Design is required.

Students who successfully complete the Mount curriculum are able to synthesize, and communicate information from different sources via many methods. These efforts position them to succeed and excel in a university setting.

## **2. Reading/English:**

Both philosophically and pedagogically, the English Department at Mount Saint Joseph Academy, builds a sound linguistic and literary foundation for its students by combining an ongoing commitment to the “basics” with present-day competencies that are vital to success in the twenty-first century global society.

Specifically, the traditional curriculum components of vocabulary and grammar/usage/structure, and literature are taught and reinforced throughout each of the four years. These fundamentals are combined with instruction in essential life skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and both oral and written communication.

Offering a rigorous curriculum for all students (both College Preparatory and Honors/AP), the English Department, ever mindful of differentiated learning styles, employs diverse teaching strategies, such as lecturing, cross-curricular teaching, technological tools (Dropbox, Google Drive, Safe Assignment, StoryKit, Voice Thread, iMovie, Animoto, InDesign, Twitter, Blogs), iPad apps (SlideShark, Lino, iTunesU, Literary Analysis Guide, Postale), and “flipped classroom techniques” (Collaborize Classroom, discussion Boards on BlackBoard, Online Quizzes, GarageBand and Fotobabble).

Affording multiple avenues for success to all students, the English Department continues to challenge its most gifted students; for example, Honors British Literature juniors have consistently fared admirably on the AP English Language and Composition Test since the Class of 1999. The AP English Literature seniors have been achieving similar results on the AP English Literature Test for many years.

Conversely, the English Department recognizes students who may require academic assistance beyond that provided by the classroom teacher. In such situations, the English Department confers with the Dean of Studies and refers students either to the school’s Academic Coach, who works on organizational, study and reading skills and monitors academic progress, and/or to the on-site staff members of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU).

Rooted in the mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the English Department, utilizing a myriad of teaching strategies and current technological applications and encouraging students in both independent and collaborative classroom environments, strives to inspire lifelong learners and lovers of literature whose mature voices reflect their roles as Christian woman leaders.

## **3. Mathematics:**

The Mathematics Department operates with an acute awareness that the material within its’ instructional jurisdiction is crucial to students’ future success in post-secondary education. Furthermore, its concepts are the “linchpin” that holds together the other components of all STEAM-based curriculum initiatives which continue to increase in importance in a technologically-dependent society.

With this responsibility in mind, the Mathematics Department offers an established, standards-based curriculum of Algebra, Geometry, Pre-Calculus and Trigonometry on both the College Preparatory level and Honors levels. Beyond these core courses, Calculus and Statistics are offered on both the College Preparatory and AP Levels. The block scheduling that is utilized at Mount Saint Joseph Academy allows for a comprehensive, challenging and rigorous course of study that includes the flexibility needed to enable any interested student to progress to Calculus and Statistics. In addition to proficiency in mathematical skills, the Mount's Mathematics Curriculum enables students to develop the essential tools of logical reasoning and critical thinking.

Classes are student-centered where teachers use a variety of instructional techniques and methods to foster intellectual curiosity and creative problem solving. Collaborative groups, lectures, flipped lessons, student presentations, and projects are all integrated with appropriate technology to ensure participation of each student. Teachers work together to keep the level of rigor uniform for each course, to share ideas for keeping lessons timely and challenging and to help students apply what they have learned to real-world situations. Additionally correct usage of mathematical vocabulary and notation is taught and expected when students explain solutions either orally or in writing.

The Mathematics team's constant communication and interaction ensures that any student requiring academic assistance beyond the norm is identified and assisted. Tutoring from the classroom teacher is foremost. Teachers make themselves available to the students at lunch, before school and after school. There is also an in-house tutor who is available during the lunch and study periods and the services of another tutor from the MCIU who comes weekly. Students help one another informally and formally, through the tutoring provided by the national Honor Society (NHS). Stronger math students participate in the Pennsylvania Math League (PAML), American Mathematics Contest (AMC) and Moody's Mega Math Challenge (M3Challenge).

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

##### **(a.1) Additional Curriculum Area, Fine Arts:**

The Fine Arts curriculum at Mount St. Joseph Academy challenges students to be agents of transformation, using the Arts to create unity and inspire reconciliation. Impelled by the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Mount desires to respond to the needs of the "dear neighbor." Teachers empower students to assume their responsibilities in the global community. In Music History, AP Art History, and Film Appreciation, students deepen their understanding of diverse value systems. Whether staging scenes from Chinese opera, practicing Japanese paper dying techniques, or discussing the depiction of damaging stereotypes in film; Fine Arts students at the Mount learn that although the world's cultures are infinitely diverse, human beings ultimately share a common spirit.

This year, the drama club will present published and original one-act plays dealing with cultural, political, and social issues that reflect the diversity of the community and the larger world. Similarly, students participate in programs such as the Memory Project. Through this international program, Mount students paint portraits for orphaned children around the world. Thus, they share their talent and help to instill feelings of dignity and self-worth in society's most marginalized members.

Always striving to reach out to the "dear neighbor" in the global community, Mount students also provide service to others much closer to home. The music students perform at nursing homes and senior centers such as St. Joseph's Villa and the Peak Senior Center. They also perform at grade schools such as Norwood-Fontbonne Academy.

Developing 21st Century competencies is central to the study of the Fine Arts. Innovation, collaboration, and creative problem solving skills are woven throughout the curriculum, as are information, media, and technological literacies. In American Musical Theater, students leverage technology such as Google Drive to complete collaborative research projects. Likewise, students in Design Basics record personal reflections about their artwork using iPads, and create QR codes that are attached to their displayed artwork. Visitors

use QR readers on their mobile devices to listen to the recordings as they are viewing the work.

The Mount's Fine Arts programs are aligned with the school's mission to prepare young women to succeed in an academically challenging environment imbued with the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The Fine Arts curriculum supports a holistic education, empowering young women to become creators of understanding, acceptance and peace in a diverse and often troubled society.

(a.2) Additional Curriculum Area, Science:

The Science Department of Mount Saint Joseph Academy is proud to offer an extensive curriculum, and challenge the Mount's young women to be collaborative, creative and innovative thinkers. In alignment with the Mission Statement, the Science course of study demands the stimulation of intellectual curiosity, creative problem-solving and the call to global engagement. It recognizes the need for each student to be given the tools with which to evaluate theory, process and interpret data, and develop innovations, so as to be the creative force of a positive future for themselves, their communities and the world.

The Science Department of Mount Saint Joseph Academy is an interactive, student-centered, participation-driven program that balances the need for expert material presentation with active student participation, synthesis, interpretation and innovation.

All students must complete a minimum of three credits of Science in order to graduate. Successful completion of Concepts of Physics, Chemistry and Biology is required of all Mount students. However, most alumnae boast more than the minimum requirements in Science. This fact is most commonly attributed to the breadth of Science electives and the future benefits of continuing science study.

From Conceptual Physics, offered in 9th grade, to AP Biology, offered in 11th or 12th grade, Mount students thrive throughout their individualized Science path. Students academically challenge themselves because they are comforted knowing that the support, assistance, and guidance of the faculty can almost guarantee their success.

The Administration allows the Science Department faculty the freedom and flexibility to develop lessons utilizing differentiated instructional techniques and encourages implementation of ever-improving technologies that address varying learning differences.

The entire Mount community's deep commitment to science education is physically visible with the recent completion of a multi-million dollar science facility and equipment enhancement. This initiative has provided upgraded facilities, new equipment, better space utilization and overall increased departmental efficiencies.

More importantly, this newly energized learning center is responding to all students' needs to secure their places in a technological future by enabling a diversified curriculum portfolio that provides course offerings to interest the College Preparatory learner as well as the Accelerated Program students.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

MSJA's core instructional focus is to ensure that each student successfully completes the college preparatory curriculum to enable them to move on to the college, career and life path of their choice.

MSJA uses "block" or intensive scheduling to enable the academic programs of the Mount to be both student-centered and collaborative. Across the curriculum, concepts that are presented are closely correlated with hands-on experience. Block scheduling allows the faculty the freedom and flexibility to develop lessons utilizing different learning modalities and to address the needs of differentiated learners.

Auditory learners respond to a material presentation that is executed in traditional classroom format or in an online format, where concepts can be reviewed repeatedly before and after class.



Teachers encourage students' visual intake with videos, demonstrations, photos, graphic handouts, etc. The increasing use of screencasts and blogs allow for students to feel that supportive materials and resources are available to them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Tactile lesson segments challenge students to physically work with materials in support of learning. Creating models, experiencing samples and using manipulatives allow a close correlation between the spoken word and hands-on experience. Partners often present exemplars for critical evaluation and collaborative review.

Kinesthetic learners are actively involved with laboratory work and analysis, group or partner activities, demonstrations, simulations, or dramatic interpretations.

The Mount's students are "digital natives" and to address that strength, technology has been seamlessly integrated across the curriculum. There are access points in all classrooms, offices and hallways to allow easy connectivity to the internet from any point in the school, at any time.

In addition, each classroom is equipped with an interactive Smart Board, Mac computer, Apple TV, DVD Player, and access to laptop carts. Through the use of new technology, the students and faculty find tools and share learning through the ever-evolving apps and programs available. As of November 8, 2013, The Mount is a 1:1 iPad School with all faculty and students using iPads to enhance the classroom experience.

The Mount's diverse educational environment and varied instructional approaches enable teachers to grow student interest, engagement and ownership. Students see the learning process as something in which they share responsibility, credit and outcomes. This proactive team-based approach has led to repeated and continued student successes.

## **6. Professional Development:**

MSJA embraces the concept that all members of the school community are learners. The faculty and administration are encouraged to utilize a myriad of learning opportunities. Each fiscal year monies are budgeted for professional growth and development. Faculty members are permitted to request funds to attend seminars, enroll in classes, or attend professional meetings that will promote and encourage the education of the Mount community. Faculty may also apply for funds to offset graduate education opportunities.

Periodically, in-house, in-service growth offerings are available to all faculty and staff members. These may be in the form of seminars, classes, webinars, trainings, etc. which are scheduled at the discretion of the Administration.

The Mount also offers "After School Specials" each Tuesday on the use of the iPad. The instructors of these workshops are peer mentors. Topics have included downloading apps, review of recommended apps, media tools, tech safety, virtual learning, communication and collaboration.

The SimpleK12 program is a web-based teacher learning community. Teachers participate in webinars that cover various curriculum topics which include mobile learning, Google tools, Common Core, various means of assessment, and STEAM. Also, being a "block-scheduled" school, new faculty members are introduced to the concept and receive mentoring from their department heads.

New members of the faculty participate in a staff development program that meets twice a month to review the mission, policies, and goals of the educational program. The new members are also introduced to monthly activities, review of calendar events, and school related issues.

The Mount formally embraced 1:1 iPads in November 2013. This initiative began in September 2012 when iPads were distributed to a pilot group of faculty members. Integration of this technology went smoother than expected and all faculty members have been given iPads and training.

Special focus has been placed on adopting the concept of the Flipped Classroom. It is believed that this model of instruction increases the opportunity for students to participate in the learning process, rather than

concentrating on the completion of assignments. Faculty members have been introduced to strategies, suggestions, tools and apps in support of this initiative.

Special attention has been given to educating the community on the topic of Bullying. All community members are gaining a better understanding of their role in addressing this concern and have been given skills to be able to identify subtle as well as outright forms of bullying.

## **7. School Leadership**

Governance of Mount Saint Joseph Academy consists of a Board of Directors with limited powers of jurisdiction. Their primary responsibilities are to insure the advancement of the school's mission, to oversee the stewardship of school resources and to plan for the future.

The Administration of the Mount is two-tiered, which delineates leadership responsibilities between the President and the Principal.

The President takes on the overall leadership role of the school as well as the non-academic responsibilities of institutional management and advancement. The Director of Development, Director of Public Relations, Director of Admissions and Director of Maintenance all directly support the President. The Director of Finance assists the President in the stewardship of fiscal responsibilities.

The Principal assumes direct responsibility for academic affairs, student affairs, and development of the faith community. The Principal is the instructional leader of the school. The President and Principal work collaboratively to insure that all aspects of the school's operation advance the mission of the Mount.

The Dean of Studies and the Dean of Students assist the Principal in facilitating the development of academic and personal growth of students. The Dean of Studies guides the academic program that is designed to provide students with varied learning opportunities and experiences. The Dean of Students encourages the development of personal responsibility among the students and coordinates the school's activities program.

The Principal is also assisted by the Director of Guidance, Campus Minister and Athletic Director to support the academic, social and spiritual development of the students. The Director of Guidance coordinates all counseling and remedial services, as well as the college application process. The Campus Minister develops the spiritual growth of the school community and the Athletic Director is responsible for all matters concerning the Athletic Department.

Academic Department Chairs assist the Principal in the selection of new teachers and coordination of curriculum assignments. They assist the Administration in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program and seek ways in which to improve it.

The combined team forms a talent-rich resource pool whose uniting focus is the successful achievement of all aspects of each student's secondary school experience. The environment created ensures that each student is nurtured academically, spiritually and socially so that their developing minds and moral compasses are correctly aligned to support the future citizens, women and achievers that they are called to be.

## PART VI - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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*The purpose of this addendum is to obtain additional information from non-public schools as noted below.*

1. Non-public school association(s): Catholic

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No
3. What are the 2013-2014 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

### 2013-2014 Tuition

Grade	Amount
K	\$0
1	\$0
2	\$0
3	\$0
4	\$0
5	\$0
6	\$0
7	\$0
8	\$0
9	\$15750
10	\$15750
11	\$15750
12	\$15750

4. What is the educational cost per student?      \$18104  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
5. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$7160
6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      12%
7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      20%

## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

<b>Subject:</b> <u>Math</u>	<b>Test:</b> <u>SAT - College Board</u>
<b>Grade:</b> <u>12</u>	<b>Edition/Publication Year:</b> <u>2013</u>
<b>Publisher:</b> <u>College Board</u>	<b>Scores are reported here as:</b> <u>NCEs</u>

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	590	587	591	588	608
Number of students tested	139	143	146	138	131
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. N/A</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. N/A</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. N/A</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:**

# REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

<b>Subject:</b> <u>Reading/ELA</u>	<b>Test:</b> <u>SAT - College Board</u>
<b>Grade:</b> <u>12</u>	<b>Edition/Publication Year:</b> <u>2013</u>
<b>Publisher:</b> <u>College Board</u>	<b>Scores are reported here as:</b> <u>NCEs</u>

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	597	603	616	606	615
Number of students tested	139	143	146	138	131
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. N/A</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. N/A</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. N/A</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

## NOTES: